



CONVENTION ON WETLANDS
CONVENTION SUR LES ZONES HUMIDES
CONVENCIÓN SOBRE LOS HUMEDALES
(Ramsar, Iran, 1971)

A message from the new Secretary General of the Convention

To members of the Ramsar community,

As I settle into my new position as Secretary General of the Convention, I want to take a moment to send my greetings to all of you and to seek your continued help. I have been involved in Ramsar matters for many years, and I feel that I know many of you very well already - I look forward eagerly to working with you again, and to developing strong working relationships with all of you whom I have not yet met.

These are challenging times for all of us who care deeply about the environmental health of our planet. Climate change, population pressures, unplanned development, unsustainable use of our natural resources, continuing poverty in many parts of the world - these are all issues that demand our attention urgently, and that is as true for those of us working chiefly with wetlands as it is for those who focus on other ecosystems. The Ramsar Convention is no longer the "niche" convention, little known to the public at large, that it may have been, say in the 1980s - we are thoroughly integrated now amongst the major players of the world environmental community, and we are poised to make a real difference in the way decision-makers perceive wetlands and their essential role in sustainable development.

We have a great opportunity before us, and we have many of the tools, both in human capabilities and in policy and technical frameworks, that we need to contribute to the global debates about water, development, poverty reduction, and so on. It is our challenge to seize that opportunity and use it effectively, and to do that we must all work together. For we are a team, in the largest sense, all doing our parts to progress towards our common objectives, which are best expressed in the mission statement that our Parties have chosen for us: "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".

Our government representatives in the Contracting Parties need to work together with their colleagues in the other Parties and with us in the Secretariat, and most importantly they need to bring our message to their colleagues in other sectors of their own governments. The NGO community can continue to contribute by working to bring Ramsar principles and guidelines to life in their local and regional technical and awareness-raising projects. Most importantly, of course, the NGOs officially recognized as our International Organization Partners can continue, and can even strengthen, their efforts at both global and local levels that have proved so profoundly valuable to the work of the Ramsar Convention over many years. I and my colleagues in the Secretariat

very much look forward to collaborating with all of these actors in the most honest and open, imaginative, and resourceful way we can.

In the coming weeks and months, we will be getting to know our colleagues in all of these sectors as we move forward towards the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP10) in the Republic of Korea in late October 2008 - and as we progress our preparations for the COP through the work of the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), the preparatory regional meetings, and the next two Standing Committee meetings, set for February and June of next year.

Our agenda is full, and it will be very challenging, but with our common will to work together we will achieve some remarkable results. I promise that my colleagues and I in the Secretariat will provide all of the leadership and support to you that we can, with the good will and good advice of our constituents amongst you all, and I encourage all of you to help us as much as you can as we move forward.

As I discover my mission, I feel its demands; it fills me with enthusiasm and a burning desire to get to work on it by holding hope high and promoting team spirit and teamwork.

Thank you.

Mr Anada Tiéga
Secretary General
Ramsar Convention on Wetlands